3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

the hottest month of the year. June to September constitutes the rainy season, and from October to December the larger part of the country is flooded with water, but the marshes and smaller Khors[1] all dry up by April. From November to April the climate is not unhealthy for Europeans. During the wet season mosquitoes are numerous. Malaria and black water fever are the diseases most dangerous to white people.

SOIL

The country is a plain with only inconsiderable elevations, on which the villages of the natives are built. The soil is black and fertile near the river and the khors, back from the water courses it is in most places poorer, sometimes sandy.

VEGETATION

The chief vegetation is high grass, interspersed with shrubs. A light forest of acacia trees is found mainly along the Nile. The acacia is the chief representative of the tree-flora: heglig (Balanites aegyptiaca), sont-acacia (Acacia arabica), Talh (Acacia Seyal), different kinds of gum-acacias, etc. A characteristic feature of the landscape are groups of deleib- and dom-palms (Borassus flabellifer and Hyphaena Thebaica); a beautiful tree is the mahogany tree (Khaya senegalensis); it is most useful as timber, but seems to be rather rare in the Shilluk country; other notable trees are: different kinds of Ficus (Sycomore fig), the ardeib tree (Tamarindus indicus), nabag (a fruit tree) etc. The vegetation on the river is most luxuriant. Though this is not the region of the sudd, yet the river is at most times largely covered with single plants and swimming islands, formed of papyrus, ambach (Herminiera Elaphroxylon), several kinds of reeds, lotus, Umm Suf (Vossia procera), Potamogeton, Ottelia, and many others. The floating vegetation often serves birds for a fishing place. Trees are much hampered in their growth by the fires which the natives light while the grass is dry; the reason for burning the grass is to hunt up game, and to get the ground cleared for cultivation.

ANIMALS

The country being thickly populated, game is not very numerous. But at some distance from the settlements large animals are still frequent, chiefly near the river towards Lake No; the neighbourhood of Kaka and north of it are also rich in game. Elephants, giraffes, buffaloes are met with, though not very frequently; antelopes and gazelles abound: bushbuck (Tragelaphus scriptus), reedbuck (Cervicapra bohor), white-eared cob (Cobus leucotis), ariel (Gazella soemmeringi), dorcas (G. dorcas), isabelline gazelle (G. isabella), oryx, waterbuck (Cobus defassa), Mrs. Gray's waterbuck (Cobus maria), gazella rubifrons, roan antelope (Hippotragus equinus bakeri), hartebeest (Bubalis jacksoni), tiang or Bastard Hartebeest (Damaliscus tiang), Oribi antelope (Ourebia) etc. Of the carnivorous family the most notable are: lion, leopard, jackal, hyena, fox, Zorilla (a little black-and-white animal resembling the American skunk),

[1] Khor (Arab) = water course drying up in the rainless season.

5:Lienhardt E-4 (no date) 1954 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

example, it is said that[1] originally God (*juok*) had the people in his land, until they ate fruit which made them sick, and God therefore sent them away. Another story tells that there was once a road to the moon which men could use, but they became too heavy to do so, in circumstances which are not here relevant.[2] Yet another story[3] tells how the sun and moon used to live together, until they quarrelled and therefore are no longer together. In some Shilluk myths (to be considered later) it is said that some men were not differentiated from animals and other creatures. There is thus the implication, though it may be conveyed in stories which are perhaps not told very seriously, that some things which were once together are now apart. The broadest division of the space around them recognized by the Shilluk is between what is above (the sky) and what is below (the earth). There is a Shilluk riddle which runs: 'What are the two half-round things (in Shilluk, *opunne*, literally 'loaves') of God (*juok*)?' and the answer is 'heaven and earth'. Hofmayr gives the explanation that 'the form in which this is figured is that of a loaf of bread'.[4] Besides sky and earth, there is the river, a third main region of the Shilluk spatial ambient. This tripartite division of the universe into earth, sky, and river, corresponds, of course, to the real categories which anyone in Shilluk country is bound in some way to acknowledge, and in which he is bound on some occasions to think. The savannah country is without mountains, ravines, forests, or other distinctive natural features which might diversify its general contours, and strike the imagination forcibly enough to modify the clarity of the simple, primary distinctions which a man observes in the natural world around him. In such a land, where there is nothing of any size to break the horizon, the sky does indeed become apparent as separate region, almost a place, in relation to the earth. Besides these, there is the river, reflecting both earth and sky. The crops and grass, on which the Shilluk and their herds depend, require that the sky should send rain and the river should rise, and they also need the fish which the river contains. The three regions of earth, sky, and river have values and associations which make the division significant in Shilluk religion and cosmology, as well as in their economy. Their Nilotic neighbours live in a country which, generally, is not unlike their own. The real foreigners come from country of different and inferior quality. Among the Dinka and Nuer also it is thought that the real foreigners come from a country different in nature from their own.

Legends of Nyikang

Legends of the birth and wanderings of Nyikang do not suggest that they occurred in a country very different from that in which the Shilluk now live, but it was a long way away from the present Shilluk kingdom. We are told that the land of Duwat, or the land of Kero, from which the Shilluk

[1] Hofmayr, 1925, p. 238. The details may be Christian.
[2] Ibid., p. 366. [3] Ibid., p. 364. [4] 1925, p. 399.

Some Observations of a Fieldtrip among the Shilluk

Mohamed Riad

131 The Shilluk occupy a country that extends from 10°45' N. to 9°15N latitude. Particularly the west bank of the WHITE NILE from about 50 kilometers north of Kaka to approximately 50 kilometers east of Lake No. There is also a Shilluk pocket within Northern Dinkaland. Thus they occupy the right bank of the White Nile from near Kodok to the confluence of the Sobat. They also extend some 60 kilometers up the Sobat river, mainly on its northern bank.

361 The Shilluk settlements, if they can be called villages, are situated from about half a kilometer to a kilometer off the river bank giving the impression of beads hung on a string(1). Also, on the banks of the khors i.e. seasonal streams which discharge into the Nile, rising from the west or east and sloping toward the Nile, Shilluk settlements are to be found. The breadth of the Shilluk land does not exceed a five hour march from the banks of the river(2) and there is a no-man's land which stretches back to the west till the Nuba-hills. This is used as a dry season (winter) grazing land by both Shilluk and nomad Baggara Arabs, but the Shilluk do not, as a rule, pasture their cattle so far to the west. This area is quite well-known only in those areas where roads go up from the river banks to the Nuba mountains. 133 The hydrology of this area is not known although some khors intersect it with courses estimated as parallel to the Nile and joining other khors to discharge seasonal waters into the Nile north of Kaka.

171 The Nile is the main waterway in the Shilluk land and because the 228 Shilluk have a comparatively long water front they are the most skilled fishermen of the Nilotic group. The most important khor is one called Collo which takes its waters from the Nile, or more precisely from the bank-swamps against Malakal and runs parallel to the Nile separated from it only by a stretch of comparatively high bank, one to three kilometers broad, and then discharges again in the Nile south of Kodok. Again there is another khor called khor Arepejar which rises from the west and discharges into the Lollo. (3) This khor is of almost no hydrological importance, but of a great significance in the realm of Shilluk cosmology and spiritual thinking. This khor is 79 the boundary between the two religious provinces into which Shillukland is 63 divided. On its banks one of the important rites of king installation takes place.

132 The Shilluk country is more or less a flat land covered with 133 Savannah grass and with occasional clusters of trees, mainly along river 137 and khor banks. The most famous tree is the Dolob(Borrassus aethiopum) which grows in beautiful groves on the Nile banks. The rainy season begins in May but occasional showers heralding the rains occur at the end of March and early April. The dry season begins near the end of October. Rainfall is heaviest in the south. Here is the mean annual rainfall at our stations:-

Fangak	(9°05'N)	1187 mm
Malakal	(9°32')	737 mm
Kodok	(9°55')	682 mm
Renk	(11°45')	506 mm

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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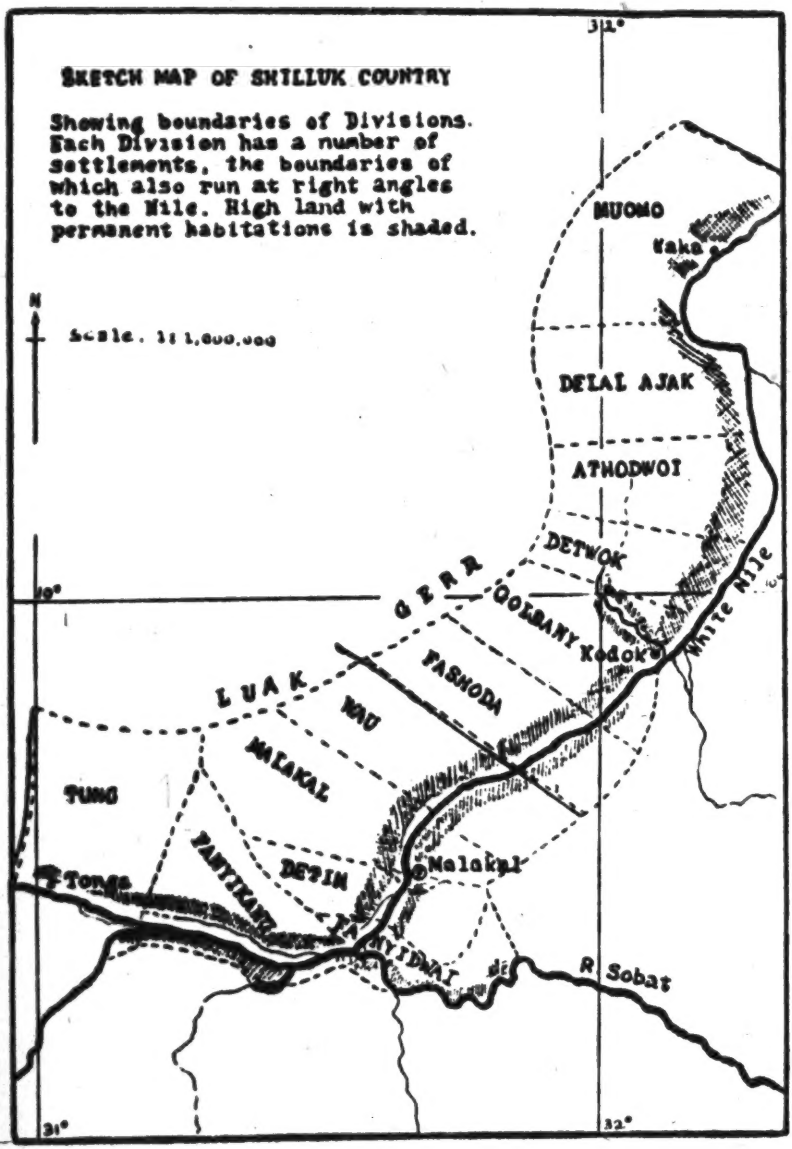


9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

that the most definite contrasts may be found. Whether this established and institutionalized monarchy is the result of diffusion from elsewhere, a legacy from ancient Egypt,[1] or the result of spontaneous development from the politico-religious functionaries who exist in embryo form among other Shilluk-speaking[2] and, indeed, other Nilotic peoples, is a controversial subject which I do not propose to discuss here.

Territorially, Shilluk country is divided into two provinces, within which are the northern and southern provinces of Muomo and Tung, eleven divisions, and finally each division into a number of settlements which are referred to as *padh*.[3] The settlement is the largest political unit which has a permanent and stable function in Shilluk society today.[4] The members occupy a common and clearly defined territory, have a common grazing and fishing area held collectively, a common name, and a common system of age-set nomenclature.[5] Within each settlement are a number of villages or hamlets, each of which, with its offshoots, is occupied by a distinct kinship group, the local lineage of one of the main Shilluk clans. One of these lineages is usually dominant and, though it does not give its name to the settlement, its leader is generally recognized as holding some authority over the rest of the community. In each settlement there are also usually representative lineages of *kwareth* who sometimes, but not always, have assumed a position of dominance within that settlement, usually by force of numbers. There are also *bang reth* living in close association with *kwareth* or tending one or more of the numerous royal shrines.[6]

There are frequent movements and migrations, both of individuals and of small domestic groups. The persons who thus take up residence in other parts of the country retain links with kinsmen in their original home and these links continue for a period. The number of generations which pass before they are forgotten is indeterminate and variable, but the factor of territorial association is an important one. Lineages of one clan living in one area are likely to retain these links and remain bound by rules of exogamy however far removed they may be in the kinship structure. Moreover, common residence in one village area or even one settlement may create bonds which are equal in strength to kinship ties and may even carry with it a bar to intermarriage. In such circumstances there is usually the fiction of common descent through the female line. Among the Shilluk there is a bar to marriage with close relatives on the maternal side carried to three or four generations, but common residence sometimes creates a more permanent prohibition.

[1] See Seligman, C. G., *Egypt and Negro Africa*. George Routledge & Sons, 1934, p. 60.

[2] For example, the Anuak nobles; see Evans-Pritchard, *The Political System of the Anuak of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan*, Monographs on Social Anthropology, London School of Economics, 1940; and Driberg, J. H., *The Lango*.

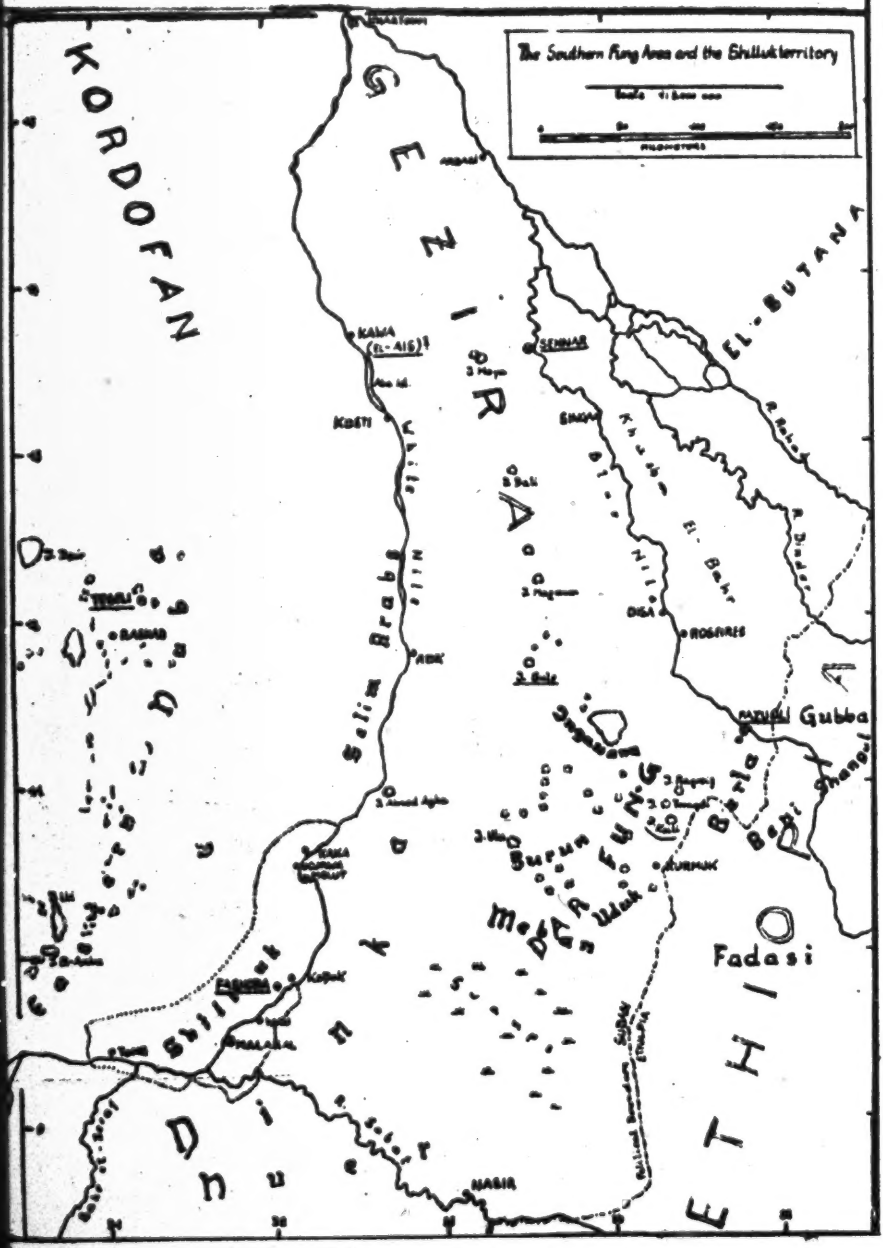
[3] *padh*. A more elastic and relative term than I had realized when writing an article on this subject in 1937. *padh* simply means 'home' or 'homeland' and Shilluk refer to *padh collo*: 'Shillukland'. The word itself has the same relativity as the Nuer word *ciang* and the Dinka word *wut*.

[4] There have, of course, been changes of boundaries and processes of fission and fusion characteristic of any segmentary society. The nature of the terrain in Shilluk country, however, precludes any great change. The limitations of high ground, with clear-cut watercourses as boundaries, together with associated economic interests, tend to stabilize communities.

[5] This is a significant fact and one which throws much light on the true nature of the Shilluk *padh*. When we compare other Nilotic tribes we find that age-set nomenclature is common to whole tribes, but does not extend beyond tribal boundaries (Nuer) or, like the Shilluk, is limited to smaller segments of society (Ngork Dinka).

[6] Lineages of the *kwareth* are referred to by the name of the *reth*, *nyireth* (son of a *reth*), or *nyinyireth* (grandson of a *reth*) who founded them. Thus *kwareth* Fadiet, *kwanyireth* Adung, &c. Similarly, *bang reth* are distinguished as *bang reth* Fadiet, *bang nyireth* Adung, &c.

10: Rind E-4,5 (1955) 1955 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23


The Southern Fung Area and the Shilluk territory
KORDOFAN
GEZIRA
EL-BUTANA
ETHIOPIA
Fadasi
Gubba
Shilluk
Dinka
Nuer
KAWA
KOSTI
SENNAR
ROSEIRES
ABAK
DIGA
MABAN HILLS
Blue Nile
White Nile
Sobat
Baro
Pibor
Bohr
Sobat
Bure
Bure
Bure

631

e) The Capital:

[692]

This is Fashoda where the king resides, and where the highest native court of appeal is held under the presidency of the king himself.

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The meaning of such a political organization is quite clear. The chief of every division is not selected or appointed by the king, but elected by the group concerned, and is formally invested by a dress from the king as a symbol of his authority. The basis of the Shilluk political system is lineage or clan, and has nothing to do with blood relationship to the royal family.

173

The present Shilluk country, it is said, is only a part of what was the Shillukland before. Just how far the Shilluk expansion did reach is controversial. My informants insisted on the fact that Nyikang reached the confluence of the White and the Blue Niles, and built a village there; and he sent messengers northwards to scout the area, but those messengers returned after reaching the site of the present Wadi Halfa (22° north latitude), informing Nyikang of the poverty of the area. After receiving this report, Nyikang did not consider another expedition, and returned to Akurwa where he was last seen. This is quite clearly an exaggeration, because at that time the state of affairs in the central and northern Sudan was just beginning to take its present shape. Moreover, the Fung kingdom and the Arab state of Gerri were in their first phases of formation, i.e. politically and militarily strong enough, and on the watch against newcomers and adventurers.

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What may have been the case is that probably the Shilluk, taking advantage of their capacity as good river-farers, descended the White Nile in their canoes.

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Now the White Nile is an interesting water course from the geographical, geological and hydrological points of view. The life story of this river, though controversial, is an interesting one, but what concerns us here is that the river is very weak, shallow and broad, with many islands, many curves, studded with swamps on each side, full of grass vegetation, fords, an ill defined basin, and in the flood season the water inundates large stretches on both sides. Such a geographical environment provides an economically poor land, with no attraction to wealthy agricultural states. But, on the other hand, it provides a paradise for fishermen, refugees, and to a certain extent a good grazing and watering area for nomads during the dry season. Such a state of affairs is well described in the following quotation:

> "Le Bahar el Abiod (the White Nile) arrose ce territoire, & divisé, soit par l'art, soit par la nature, en un nombre considérable de petits canaux, il forme autant de petites îles, sur chacune desquelles il y a un village ... Les habitans sont tous pêcheurs, & ont des canots avec lesquels ils remontent & descendent (le fleuve) ... " 22)

22] Bruce, 440.

133 From the strategical point of view, this broad, shallow and swampy water course would provide a sort of permanent border to any state east or west of it, as well as a kind of no-man's land, in which case river farers are safe.

174 It is most probable that the Shilluk, perhaps with their leader Nyikang, or alone, undertook many scouting expeditions downstream, and it may be the case that their economic activities as fishermen also took them down stream where they found the good shelters which the Islands provide. Furthermore, the Shilluk may have taken advantage of their safe positions, and of their skill with their canoes, to fall upon wandering nomads by surprise, and loot their cattle on both sides of the river. In this way it came [131] to be that Shilluk villages were reported on the Islands 23) south of 13 degrees latitude.

We do not know whether such settlements were permanent or seasonal, but the existence of such settlements must not at all mean that the Shilluk occupied both sides for sure, or even established Shilluk authority for a single generation. This is quite clear from Shilluk tradition itself. Quoting my informants, I would rather say that Nyikang stayed some years down stream, 173 and then returned. There was no other repetition of such a Shilluk 174 adventure. None of the followers of Nyikang tried to press their claim northward. Moreover, the Shilluk traditions define the country as being 'from Khomo to Tung' 24), these being the present Shilluk borders. Had it been more once, why was it not preserved in the tradition?

c) The FUNG 25)

173 The Fung kingdom was one of the most important kingdoms that ever rose in the Sudan. It was the sole heir to the Alwa kingdom. The founder of the Islamic Empire was a man called Amara Dunkas. There is evidence that this Amara was, before founding Sennar, a king of an area which may be defined as corresponding to the present Southern Butana 26), the area where the Abyssinian plateau and the Sudan plains meet. His capital was called Lamul, 26) which some historians put on the present Ethiopian and Eritrean border, between the rivers Takazze and Khor el Gash. 27)

It is agreed that Amara Dunkas did not conquer Soba, the Capital of Alwa, alone, but he was a higher partner with another Arab chief in this great task. The Fung Chronicles tell us that Amara rallied his forces near Jebel Moya and moved north, while the Arabs moved south from their stronghold near the sixth cataract, and together smashed Soba. 28)

23) Westermann, p. XX.
24) Lienhardt, p. 151.
25) Roscily, p.48, defines the first kingdom of Amara as including the northwestern part of the present Ethiopia.
26) Crawford, pp. 134-142. A description of Roubeni's journey and how he met Amara in Lamul. Arkell in (A) tried to reduce the name Lamul to Lul, a district in the present Shillukland.
27) Roscily's opinion given to me in a personal discussion in Cairo.
28) Awad, p. 252.

114 174 4) Evidences of the Theory of a Shilluk origin of the Fung:

James Bruce was the first to declare that the Fung were originally a Shilluk northern offshoot, who descended upon the Arabs, defeated them, and erected Sennar as a seat of their new Kingdom.

First of all, it is quite clear from the Journal of Bruce that he was very much interested in the Shangalla, and probably confused Shangalla, Shankala, and Shilluk. Once, while in Tsawa near Godaref, he said that "The Fung were originally Shankala or Hamidge", 61) and on arriving at Sennar, he added, "and are, as they are called, Fungo, that is Shangalla converted to Islamism, of the country whence those Shangalla came to drive out the Arabs under Wad Agib. Of these, the government is composed. The common Shilook, or troops of the king, are mostly pagans even yet." 62)

Further quotations from Bruce give an idea about the mess into which he had fallen. He says that the king of Sennar pretends to be of noble Arab element, "but his wooly hair, and black flat features, show him to be a Shangalla; the particular name Shilook. These inhabit the large islands in the river El-Aiss (the White Nile) ... The name of Shankala, given to the true blacks in Abyssinia, is not known in the kingdom of Sennar, though in features and complexion they are the same people. The rivel El-Aiss is twice as broad as the Nile and very deep in all the course of it. Before it joins the Nile are many islands, in these dwell the Shilook, who rob in barks up the whole of it. The other blacks come from Goba, Noba, and Fazuclo, three southern provinces which depend on Sennar". 63)

The Shangalla or the Beni Shangul are Negroes of negroid tribes, living in the river valleys in the mountainous western Abyssinian escarpment. They were included within the Fung kingdom throughout its history.

It would seem that the description of the White Nile, which Bruce names El-Aiss, and the description of the people who inhabit the islands of this river, is quite a separate sentence, which has nothing to do with the preceding sentence, in which he returns the Fung to a Shangalla origin. This assumption is validated by the above quotation, in which he says that the Fung are the Shangalla converted to Islam, and defines the Shilluk as the troops of the king. But this again contradicts the famous quotation, in which Bruce asserts that in 1504 a Shilluk migration founded Sennar.

114 174 It is interesting to know that Bruce's statement about the Nile was not correct. He imagined that the Blue Nile was the

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61) Arkell, (A), p. 220

62) Ibid, p. 220

63) Ibid, p. 220

10: Riad E-4,5 (1955) 1955 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

real Nile, and though he had explored the area of Lake Tana, he did not follow the river's course down the Sudan, but made a short-cut from Abyssinia to the Butana plains and to Sennar. All his knowledge about the course of the Blue Nile out of Sennar is hearsay only, as well as his knowledge about the White Nile. Thus, Bruce perceived that the mountains of Fazoglí extend uninterrupted to the Nuba mountains. On this assumption he considered that the White Nile was a little tributary to the Main Nile, and had its source in the Fazoglí-Nuba chain of mountains. If he erred in geographical points, could it not be possible that he would accordingly err in the relative positions of the various tribes?

Arkell dwelt on the statement of Bruce that the Sennar kings were lawfully killed by a special officer called Bid el Qon, and after the sanction of a special committee formed by the great officials of the kingdom. He tried to link this habit with the Shilluk divine kings, supporting ultimately the theory of the Shilluk origin of the Funj. Moreover, he depended much upon verbal similarities as proofs to his theory, such as Kwom, the Shilluk word for their sacred stool, to be transformed to Qon, in Bid el Qon etc. We have shown clearly that any comparison between the Shilluk king-killing and the alledged Funj killing is false, due to the lack of the essential notion of kings as incarnations of the first Shilluk king.

Crawford, though he does not suggest a Shilluk origin of the Funj, says that there were certain Shilluk associations. He further states: "I suggest that the Shilluk association was not derived directly from the Shilluk region on the White Nile, but indirectly from the Fazoghli region and the gubels to the west whose inhabitants were partly at any rate of Shilluk origin. When Amara Dunkas marched down the Blue Nile and founded his kingdom he may have carried with him some of these Shilluk associations ..."[64] Crawford then suggests that the Shilluk migrated to this area from the White Nile region starting from Melut, or Jebel Ahmed Agha, or Rank. He is compelled to such an explanation because

1) he finds that the inhabitants of the Fazoglí region are "Negroid, and can hardly therefore have come from the north or east, and in the southeast is the land of the Hamitic Galla". [65]
2) that "evidence of place names (in both this area and the White Nile area) is here quite conclusive". [66]

It is quite clear that Crawford does not take into consideration that the whole of the Fazoglí area as well as other areas to the north were, in the distant past, a Negro home, which shrank to the present picture of pockets in the river valleys which cut deep in the western escarpment of the Abyssinian plateau.

64) Crawford, p. 186
65) ibid, p. 187
66) ibid, p. 187.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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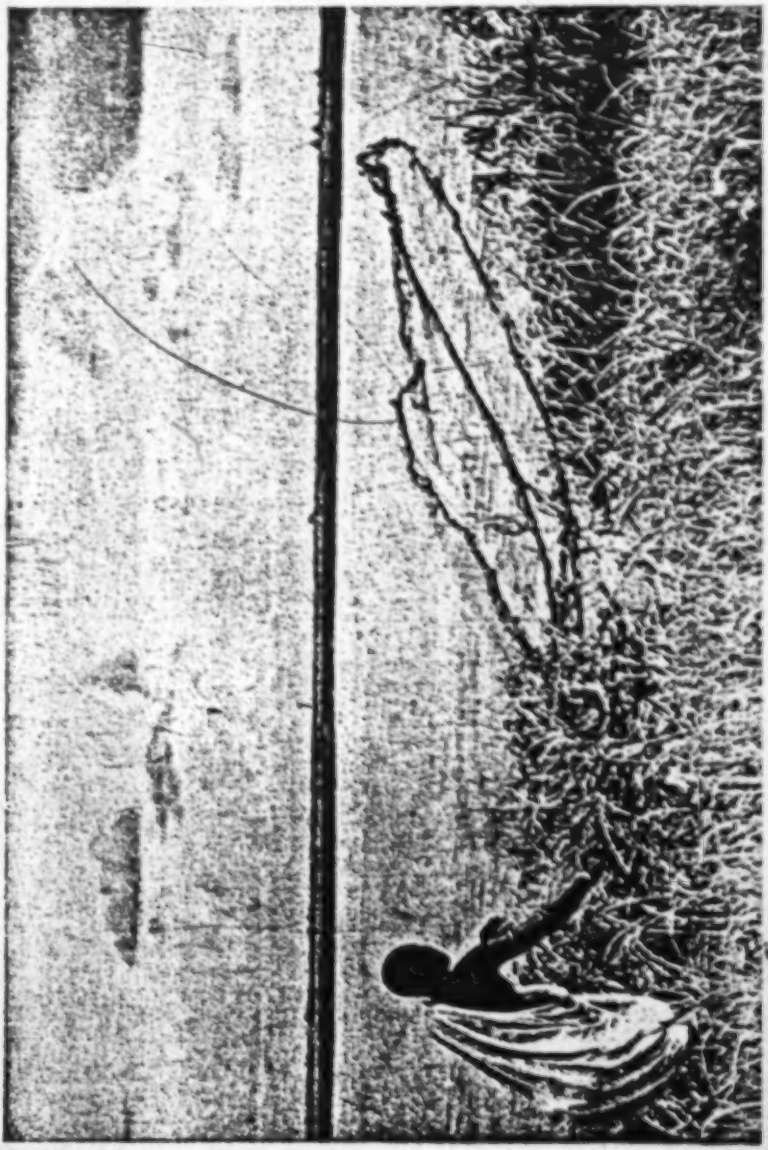

P.P.H.

SHILLUK FISHERMAN

[FACING p. viii]

19: Howell & Thomson E, G-5 (1943-1944) 1946
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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[FACING P. 6]

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

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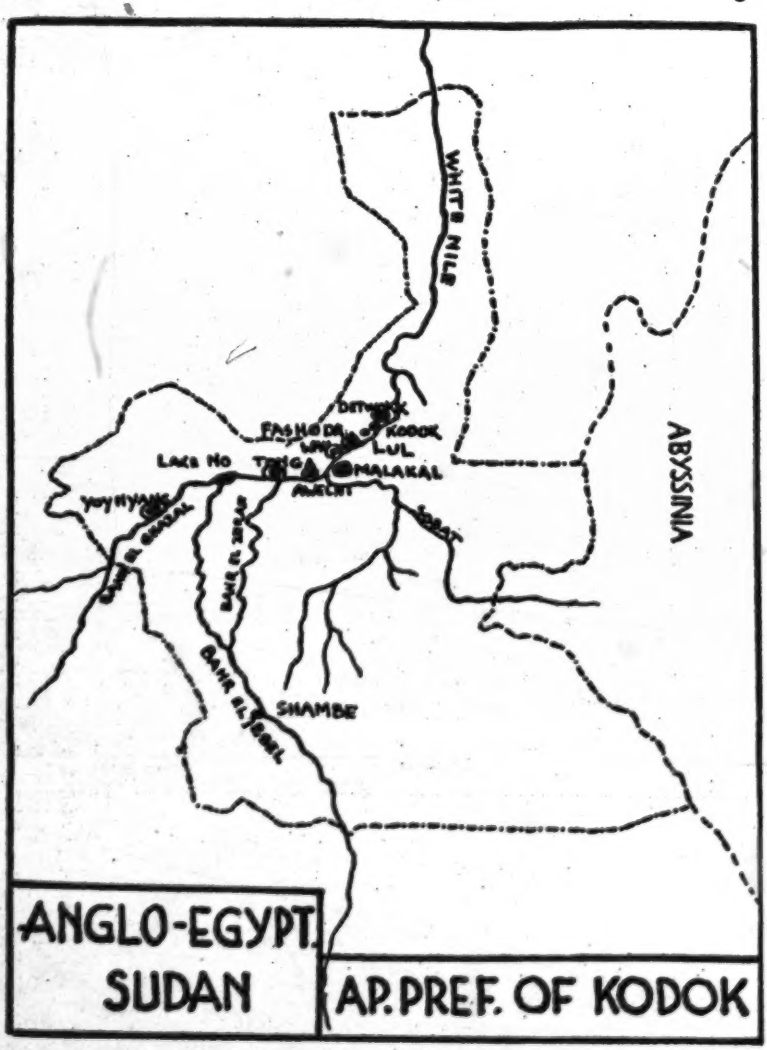
This was made on the paddle steamer which wanders along the river between Khartoum in the north and Juba in the south, accepting and delivering mail and cargo at the trading posts and mission stations established on the Nile banks. The good ship *Rejaf* was more of a convoy than a single vessel, for she pushed and pulled along with her seven barges for passengers and cargo. First-class passengers were accommodated on the steamer itself; intermediate second-class passengers were carried on a house-boat-like barge alongside; in front went three barges conveying

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23



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had been warned that the boat would arrive at Detwok about 9 a.m. At last I heard the raucous hoot which was so often to rouse me from my beauty sleep during the coming years; I bade a quick farewell to the other Fathers who had

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29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

Chapter IV

SHILLUK LIFE

The Shilluk country is for the most part flat, low-lying grass-land. The river by constant pressure frequently breaks through its containing banks and, sweeping away the soft soil, inundates the land lying behind them. Since nothing is done to repair the broken banks, these inundations increase each year as with the rise of the Nile the waters creep ever further inland, receding only slowly with the fall of the flood waters. As a consequence of this, Shilluk villages are usually built well back from the river, at least half a mile from the highest point of the flood. Usually, too, they are built along the main road passing from Kaka to Tonga. In some areas, particularly in the Detwok-Kodok locality, villages can be found several miles inland, even up to as much as fourteen miles. In such places the people depend for their water supplies on the scum-covered water holes dug here and there. Naturally, under conditions like this personal hygiene is somewhat at a discount, and social or parochial calls present their own problems. During the dry season the Nile is the only source of water for most villages, even those situated miles away from the river. At Detwok, for instance, it is a common sight to see the women of Aguno trudging past the mission at six o'clock in the morning, having already walked five miles. In half an hour or so they will be on their way back balancing their full water-pots on their heads. They cannot reach their homes again before nine o'clock when they will have to set to work to grind millet and prepare the morning meal. If they are careful with the water it may last for two days, but then they will have to pick up the large earthenware pots and take the hated road to the Nile more than five miles off. Once when I happened to be passing through